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Mrs Carolyn Barker
Acting Headteacher
Glendene Arts Academy
Crawlaw Road
Easington Colliery
Peterlee
County Durham
SR8 3LP

Dear Mrs Barker

Special measures monitoring inspection of Glendene Arts Academy

Following my visit with Julie McGrane, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 January 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the academy's previous monitoring inspection.

This was the second monitoring inspection since the academy became subject to special measures, following the inspection which took place in June 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement, which were identified during that inspection, is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence, in particular the failure of the proprietor (Governing Body/Trust) to provide a statement of action, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The academy is not making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.

The proprietor's statement of action is not fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I strongly recommend that the academy does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of

State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Durham and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2014

- Urgently improve the safeguarding of students by:
 - ensuring that all members of staff and governors are regularly trained in safeguarding and child protection
 - making sure that all required safe recruitment checks are carried out and recorded on the single central record
 - completing detailed records about all serious incidents, including where restraint is used, as quickly as possible afterwards
 - routinely reviewing information about serious incidents by senior leaders and governors to ensure areas for improvement in the academy's provision are identified and put in place as quickly as possible
 - ensuring that the academy's safeguarding policy is consistently implemented and rigorously monitored.

- Improve the quality of teaching, including for post-16 students, so that it is at least consistently good and enables all pupils in all subjects to be challenged in their learning and reach their full potential by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching
 - ensuring accurate assessment of pupils' attainments and progress, including rigorous moderation of teachers' assessments with other schools is carried out regularly
 - raising expectations and ensuring that teachers take full account of what each pupil already knows and can do so that activities challenge them
 - improving the use of assessment and knowledge of how to challenge and increase the progress of the most able pupils and those with the most profound learning difficulties
 - providing high-quality professional development and training for staff focused on eliminating gaps in subject knowledge, particularly in the teaching of reading, writing and numeracy
 - ensuring that staff understand and implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - improving the academy's approach to the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) so that pupils learn new sounds quickly and are given books that allow them to put into practice what they have learned
 - ensuring there is a rigorous and effective approach to teaching literacy and numeracy in all areas of the curriculum.

- Improve pupils' behaviour including their attendance by:
 - ensuring an up-to-date behaviour policy, with clear sanctions and rewards, is understood by pupils, parents and staff, and is consistently implemented
 - ensuring that behaviour incidents are rigorously logged and efforts to bring about improvements are evaluated
 - reporting attendance patterns and information about sanctions, rewards and

incidents routinely to governors

increasing attendance through setting ambitious targets, and working closely with the pupils, their parents, and other agencies, to achieve these.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously monitoring important aspects of the academy's work, in particular pupils' progress and their behaviour, and the quality of teaching so that leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of how well each pupil is learning
 - ensuring this information is drawn together to provide an accurate self-evaluation of how well the academy is performing and a well-matched improvement plan
 - making sure all of the pupil premium and primary school sports funding are used effectively
 - improving communication of academy leaders and managers, including governors, with other staff so that the policies and developments are implemented consistently and so that morale is improved
 - ensuring performance management is rigorous and that targets set for teachers are specific and effective to help improve pupils' progress
 - ensuring that expectations and responsibilities for leaders at all levels are clear and detailed within their job role information.

- Improve governance by improving communication with parents so that they understand who the governors are and their roles and responsibilities, and are fully involved in and kept up to date with academy developments.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Report on the monitoring inspection on 14 - 15 January 2015

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with you, members of staff responsible for safeguarding and the early years, and the Chair and another member of the Governing Body/Trust. Inspectors also spoke with a number of staff about aspects of the academy's curriculum and the general provision for the pupils and students. The inspectors read and evidenced a range of academy documentation, which included the single central record of checks made on adults who work in the academy, as well as pupil behaviour and restraint logs. The minutes from the most recent Governing Body/Trust and senior leadership team meetings, the academy's revised post-Ofsted action plan and the most up-to-date self-evaluation of the academy's quality of provision were also read and evaluated. Inspectors observed the school in action, including eight part lessons and an assembly; they also looked at a large number of pupils' and students' workbooks.

Context

There have been some significant changes since the previous inspection monitoring visit. A new Board of Directors, established with support from the Department for Education (DfE) has met twice. Members of this Board make up both the Governing Body and current Trust of the academy. An acting headteacher was appointed in October and works for at least three and a half days each week in the academy. A specialist leader of education (SLE) was seconded from a local authority school, full time, from October. Ascent Multi-Academy Trust has been approached by the DfE to become sponsors for the academy, with discussions on-going at this time.

One assistant headteacher is on long-term absence and two other staff members remain suspended, awaiting disciplinary and other hearings. Some temporary appointments have been made at middle leadership level. Four support staff are on long-term absence. Two teachers left the academy at the end of the autumn term and one teacher reduced her contractual time. Four new appointments were made, of which two have a specialist background in English and literacy. Two of these new appointments started in January and the remaining two are due to start in February. Eight new, full-time-equivalent support staff have been appointed to provide specific support for pupils and students with the most complex needs. Two new cover supervisors have also been appointed.

Achievement of pupils at the academy

Pupil and student underachievement, seen at the time of the previous inspection, generally remains, but there are now signs of senior leaders and staff showing a greater understanding of the actions needed to raise overall standards across the school. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' and students' workbooks show the signs of this

underachievement. Some, but not yet consistently enough, good pupil achievement is seen. For example, the written and oral work from a combined Years 6, 7 and 8 class working on a topic about the planets is challenging the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding about our world and its dependence on other planets for life to exist. The pupils' developing knowledge in this topic is being used to great effect by the teacher in class discussions, which results in very high levels of engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

The quality of teaching

The acting headteacher has quickly identified where the strengths and weaknesses exist in the quality of teaching. There is some good teaching but this is not consistent across the academy and across the full curricular range. There remains a significant amount of teaching, which is preventing the pupils and students from making the progress of which they are capable. This is because the work lacks challenge and is not assessed accurately enough on pupils' and students' identified needs and prior attainment. As a result, too much work fails to challenge the pupils and students to make fast enough progress in their learning. The existing data collected by the academy to demonstrate pupils' and students' achievement is unreliable and have not been subjected to robust external moderation to validate its accuracy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

There have been a number of important developments in the academy's safeguarding and safety arrangements since the previous inspection. Child protection training has taken place and there are now a suitable number of governors and staff trained to an appropriate level in safer recruitment. Start of term meetings are being used to update staff knowledge of safeguarding issues. Training in 'assertive discipline' has started, with the aim to complete this before the next monitoring inspection visit. All non-routine external visits have been suspended until every aspect of the academy's safeguarding procedures and processes meet acceptable and required statutory standards. The academy is making progress with its development of a more accurate and robust behaviour log. The pupils' and students' behaviour, when moving in and round the academy, is progressing well. However, as in the previous inspection, there remains a significant amount of teaching where, because of its mediocrity or inadequacies, pupils and students are unable to adequately show positive attitudes and enthusiasm for their learning.

The quality of leadership in and management of the academy

The appointment of a part-time acting headteacher, with recent and relevant experience of leading a special school academy, has made a significant contribution to the capacity of leadership and management. This appointee has quickly and generally accurately assessed the main imperatives for rapid improvement. Proposals

for re-structuring the senior leadership team are complete and awaiting formal approval by the Governing Body/Trust. Staff report to inspectors that there is greater and clearer involvement in the life of the academy and that they believe there is an emerging senior leadership team capable of bringing about the necessary improvements. There is now a regular six-week cycle of performance management meetings for teachers; this review programme has yet to include all support staff but this further development is essentially reliant on the Governing Body/Trust's approval of senior leadership restructuring. The latest iteration of the post-Ofsted action plan is now fit for purpose but needs to be further improved with greater clarity about milestones (interim dates over the life of the plan), by which senior staff and governors can accurately and regularly measure the progress being made by the academy.

There has been a strengthening of the Governing Body/Trust with the appointment/election of some experienced educationalists who have a track record of success in education and from existing parents of children who attend the academy. These new additions have helped to increase its capacity to address the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. There is recognition from members that a significant amount of work is needed to bring governance up to a good overall level of effectiveness. Although its work is influenced by the on-going disciplinary issues with two suspended members of staff, the Governing Body/Trust has not responded to the legal requirements resulting from the special measures judgement. This applies, in particular, to the requirement to prepare a written statement of the action it proposes to take and the period within which it is proposed to take this action, in response to the inspection report. It has also failed to seek to clarify what arrangements will be made to inform registered parents and carers of the proposed action, including ascertaining their views and taking these into account. The failure to move quickly enough on the recommendations to carry out external reviews of governance and the academy's use of its pupil premium funding is, in part only, due to the on-going changes that have occurred at Governing Body/Trust level. However, these reviews now need to be expedited urgently in order to help the Governing Body move forward in addressing its key responsibility to bring about rapid improvement in all aspects of the academy's work.

The academy has specialist status for the arts and it continues to give a focus to these areas in its curriculum. However, there is no evidence that this specialism is helping to raise standards or improve the overall quality of teaching across the academy.

External support

The academy is receiving regular and well-targeted external support from the Ascent Trust. This includes essential safeguarding and some curricular support, all of which are well linked to the identified needs of academy staff. Following the judgement at the first monitoring visit that the proprietor's (Governing Body/Trust) statement of

action was not fit for purpose because one was not prepared and presented, the same judgement is made from this inspection monitoring visit because it still has not been written.

In order to bring about the rapid improvements required before the third monitoring inspection visit, the academy's governors and senior leaders should:

- Expedite the proposed re-structuring of the senior management team, with redefined roles and responsibilities.
- Prepare a proprietor's (Governing Body/Trust) statement of action and implement arrangements to ascertain the views of registered parents and carers on the proposed actions.
- Plan and commission external reviews of governance and the academy's use of its pupil premium funding.